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(Original Signature of Member)

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans  
Affairs to establish traumatic brain injury centers.

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**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota introduced the following bill; which was referred to  
the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Sec-  
retary of Veterans Affairs to establish traumatic brain  
injury centers.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY CENTERS.**

4       (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subchapter II of chapter 73  
5       of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting  
6       after section 7320 the following new section:

1 **“§ 7320A. Centers for traumatic brain injury re-**  
2 **search, education, and clinical activities**

3 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to  
4 provide for the improvement of the provision of health care  
5 to eligible veterans with traumatic brain injuries  
6 through—

7 “(1) the conduct of research (including research  
8 on improving facilities of the Department concen-  
9 trating on traumatic brain injury care and on im-  
10 proving the delivery of traumatic brain injury care  
11 by the Department);

12 “(2) the education and training of health care  
13 personnel of the Department; and

14 “(3) the development of improved models and  
15 systems for the furnishing of traumatic brain injury  
16 care by the Department.

17 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—(1) The Sec-  
18 retary shall establish and operate centers for traumatic  
19 brain injury research, education, and clinical activities.  
20 Such centers shall be established and operated by collabo-  
21 rating Department facilities as provided in subsection  
22 (c)(1). Each such center shall function as a center for—

23 “(A) research on traumatic brain injury;

24 “(B) the use by the Department of specific  
25 models for furnishing traumatic brain injury care;

1           “(C) education and training of health-care pro-  
2           fessionals of the Department; and

3           “(D) the development and implementation of  
4           innovative clinical activities and systems of care with  
5           respect to the delivery of traumatic brain injury care  
6           by the Department.

7           “(2) The Secretary shall, upon the recommendation  
8           of the Under Secretary for Health, designate the centers  
9           under this section. In making such designations, the Sec-  
10          retary shall ensure that the centers designated are located  
11          in various geographic regions of the United States. The  
12          Secretary may designate a center under this section only  
13          if—

14                  “(A) the proposal submitted for the designation  
15                  of the center meets the requirements of subsection  
16                  (c);

17                  “(B) the Secretary makes the finding described  
18                  in subsection (d); and

19                  “(C) the peer review panel established under  
20                  subsection (e) makes the determination specified in  
21                  subsection (e)(3) with respect to that proposal.

22           “(3) Not more than five centers may be designated  
23          under this section.

1       “(4) The authority of the Secretary to establish and  
2       operate centers under this section is subject to the appro-  
3       priation of funds for that purpose.

4       “(c) PROPOSALS FOR DESIGNATION OF CENTERS.—  
5       A proposal submitted for the designation of a center under  
6       this section shall —

7               “(1) provide for close collaboration in the estab-  
8       lishment and operation of the center, and for the  
9       provision of care and the conduct of research and  
10      education at the center, by a Department facility or  
11      facilities in the same geographic area which have a  
12      mission centered on traumatic brain injury care and  
13      a Department facility in that area which has a mis-  
14      sion of providing tertiary medical care;

15              “(2) provide that no less than 50 percent of the  
16      funds appropriated for the center for support of clin-  
17      ical care, research, and education will be provided to  
18      the collaborating facility or facilities that have a  
19      mission centered on traumatic brain injury care; and

20              “(3) provide for a governance arrangement be-  
21      tween the collaborating Department facilities which  
22      ensures that the center will be established and oper-  
23      ated in a manner aimed at improving the quality of  
24      traumatic brain injury care at the collaborating fa-

1 cility or facilities which have a mission centered on  
2 traumatic brain injury care.

3 “(d) FINDING OF SECRETARY.—The finding referred  
4 to in subsection (b)(2)(B) with respect to a proposal for  
5 designation of a site as a location of a center under this  
6 section is a finding by the Secretary, upon the rec-  
7 ommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, that the  
8 facilities submitting the proposal have developed (or may  
9 reasonably be anticipated to develop) each of the following:

10 “(1) An arrangement with an accredited med-  
11 ical school that provides education and training in  
12 traumatic brain injury care and with which one or  
13 more of the participating Department facilities is af-  
14 filiated under which medical residents receive edu-  
15 cation and training in traumatic brain injury care  
16 through regular rotation through the participating  
17 Department facilities so as to provide such residents  
18 with training in the diagnosis and treatment of trau-  
19 matic brain injury.

20 “(2) An arrangement under which nursing, so-  
21 cial work, counseling, or allied health personnel re-  
22 ceive training and education in traumatic brain in-  
23 jury care through regular rotation through the par-  
24 ticipating Department facilities.

1           “(3) The ability to attract scientists who have  
2           demonstrated achievement in research—

3                   “(A) into the evaluation of innovative ap-  
4           proaches to the design of traumatic brain injury  
5           care; or

6                   “(B) into the causes, prevention, and  
7           treatment of traumatic brain injury.

8           “(4) The capability to evaluate effectively the  
9           activities of the center, including activities relating  
10          to the evaluation of specific efforts to improve the  
11          quality and effectiveness of traumatic brain injury  
12          care provided by the Department at or through indi-  
13          vidual facilities.

14          “(e) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—(1) In order to provide  
15          advice to assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for  
16          Health to carry out their responsibilities under this sec-  
17          tion, the official within the central office of the Veterans  
18          Health Administration responsible for traumatic brain in-  
19          jury care shall establish a peer review panel to assess the  
20          scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are sub-  
21          mitted to the Secretary for the designation of centers  
22          under this section.

23          “(2) The panel shall consist of experts in the fields  
24          of traumatic brain injury research, education and training,  
25          and clinical care. Members of the panel shall serve as con-

1 sultants to the Department.(3) The panel shall review  
2 each proposal submitted to the panel by the official re-  
3 ferred to in paragraph (1) and shall submit to that official  
4 its views on the relative scientific and clinical merit of each  
5 such proposal. The panel shall specifically determine with  
6 respect to each such proposal whether that proposal is  
7 among those proposals which have met the highest com-  
8 petitive standards of scientific and clinical merit.

9 “(4) The panel shall not be subject to the Federal  
10 Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

11 “(f) AWARD OF FUNDING.—Clinical and scientific in-  
12 vestigation activities at each center established under this  
13 section —

14 “(1) may compete for the award of funding  
15 from amounts appropriated for the Department of  
16 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research  
17 account; and

18 “(2) shall receive priority in the award of fund-  
19 ing from such account insofar as funds are awarded  
20 to projects and activities relating to traumatic brain  
21 injury.

22 “(g) DISSEMINATION OF USEFUL INFORMATION.—  
23 The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that infor-  
24 mation produced by the research, education and training,  
25 and clinical activities of centers established under this sec-

tion that may be useful for other activities of the Veterans Health Administration is disseminated throughout the Veterans Health Administration. Such dissemination shall be made through publications, through programs of continuing medical and related education provided through regional medical education centers under subchapter VI of chapter 74 of this title, and through other means. Such programs of continuing medical education shall receive priority in the award of funding.

“(h) SUPERVISION OF CENTERS.—The official within the central office of the Veterans Health Administration responsible for traumatic brain injury care shall be responsible for supervising the operation of the centers established pursuant to this section and shall provide for ongoing evaluation of the centers and their compliance with the requirements of this section.

“(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the research and education and training activities of centers established pursuant to this section such sums as may be necessary.

“(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allo-



1 cate to such centers from other funds appropriated for  
2 that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans  
3 Affairs medical services account and the Department of  
4 Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account  
5 such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health deter-  
6 mines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this sec-  
7 tion.

8 “(j) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than February 1  
9 of each of year the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall sub-  
10 mit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate  
11 and House of Representatives a report on the status and  
12 activities of the centers for traumatic brain injury re-  
13 search, education, and clinical activities during the pre-  
14 ceding fiscal year. Each such report shall include the fol-  
15 lowing:

16 “(1) A description of the activities carried out  
17 at each center and the funding provided by the De-  
18 partment for such activities.

19 “(2) A description of the advances made at  
20 each of the participating facilities of the center in  
21 research, education and training, and clinical activi-  
22 ties relating to traumatic brain injury care and  
23 treatment.

24 “(3) A description of the actions taken by the  
25 Under Secretary for Health pursuant to subsection

1 (g) to disseminate information derived from such ac-  
2 tivities throughout the Veterans Health Administra-  
3 tion.

4 “(4) The evaluation of the Secretary as to the  
5 effectiveness of the centers in fulfilling the purposes  
6 of this section.”.

7 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
8 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting  
9 after the item relating to section 7320 the following new  
10 item:

“7320A. Centers for traumatic brain injury research, education, and clinical ac-  
tivities.”.